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Britain and the Open Society

THE MAP of Britain's troubles pictured in the most conservative colors possible would still reach luridly all around the world. England at home must cut down her rations of food and take a new resolution of patience waiting for shelter and clothing. Across in Germany the local "Big Four" continue to fail to agree. Then the line runs into the Mediterranean, past Spain, past Italy, skirting Jugoslavia to the current eminence of Greece. Greece and Turkey and the Italian African colonies, Palestine and stop again in Iran. At the end, India is rumbling; there are China and the Dutch East Indies. The century-old question, "Is the British Empire going?" appears to be reaching perilously close to an answer.

There is no method, no possibility, no meaning to sign over the problems of the British system to the United Nations Organization. The UNO is made up of member states who have policies and abilities when they come to meeting, or else they don't have policies and abilities. The UNO is not successor to a great Empire or Commonwealth or vaguely assembled system. Mr. Bevin cannot simply go to the UNO and thrown down his burdens and say, "Here, UNO, look at all these messes. You take over and clean up the situation." Rather he must go with a policy to offer the UNO for its joint action and for the action of the member states. He must go and stand attack and attack.

The British Commonwealth and Empire and its politically unintegrated "system" is an old and very subtle and only loosely definable organization. Historically and even today it involves a lot of exploitation, much prejudice and pride and fairly brutal conceptions of what is a good civilization from the viewpoint of the whole world and of God. The English are the last to deny this, and the present governors of the British state have always been the last of the English to deny it. But here and now, in the rough distinctions of political decision, the British system currently means what has been termed an "open" society as contrasted to "closed"; it is non-totalitarian; it permits a remarkable miscellany of astonishingly diverse bosses; its principal managers give a confident impression that they desire to solve social and economic and political problems with liberty kept alive and in a position to prosper.

What are America's relations to Great Britain? In most ways, especially in the less formal ways, they are extremely intimate and friendly. In formal ways, however, in regard to several perfectly objective political problems which the British are up against, our position is far more ambiguous and far less friendly. Witness the UNO meeting. American reporters claim that the efforts of Mr. Stettinius were devoted to "quieting" the Greece dispute and keeping England from the vote of confidence she might have got. while leaving the record such that Russia can use it for her own propaganda against Britain. In Germany, for instance, while secrecy still shrouds all, rumors of increasing force and definiteness tell that our policy and England's are growing more and more divergent. In the Far East, while the supreme command of "united" forces has been under our control, we erase the names off American equipment and let the English take the rap for rough work in the Indies. In Washington, Congress delays endorsement of the big loan. Our official action has been to appease those who attack Britain.

The Russian pressure on the British Empire is no sporting match. Most clearly Russian pressure is now bearing down on the Mediterranean and Near East. If appeasement runs its full course and everything is ceded there, then the British system breaks up for good—and the remains of an open society, a free world, are thrown back practically into our own reluctant lap. There appears to be only one intelligible reason for America to permit this to happen, and that is the very persuasive reason of radical pacifism. If the American people have considered the cost of power struggles in the modern world and the constant burden of maintaining a civilization based as much as modern civilizations are upon material strength and worldly administration, and if we have looked honestly at the kind of defeat that nations undergo these days when they are beaten

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by a state that holds by a power civilization, and if we have chosen physical defeat and pacifism and the chances of another kind of culture, then, naturally, we should refuse responsibility for the relatively open society existing now.

To an outsider, anyway, there is nothing sacrosanct about the complex British Empire system with its associated Dutch and other adjuncts, and especially there is no holy reason why the rest of the world ought to bleed to keep various colonial peoples colonials. But to whatever extent Americans are planning to undertake an active and responsible part in the management of world politics, we have an obligation to consider seriously the way changes are to come to the British system and what is to happen to peoples when, as, and if they leave it. The Russians think seriously about it, there is no doubt. Allies as the Russians are, and understandingly fascinated by prospects of warm water ports, oil reserves, economically backward peoples to integrate in their Union, strategic locations to expand their mighty base of overwhelming practical control, still Russia is the current protagonist of totalitarianism and the closed society. If the United States wants to champion liberty or to protect its own right to work out its own problems, it will not throw over work with Britain in a way to decrease further the areas of partial but still potential freedom.

State of the CIO

ALTHOUGH the most sensational impact upon local segments of the American public has been made by the AFL tugboat strike in New York, the CIO has accounted for nearly all the work stoppages which have recently so sadly dented the national business index. Heavy industry is for the most part organized by CIO; also the inability of management and the CIO United Steel Workers to reach agreement has hung up scores of dependent industrial plants. The continuation of the GM strike has also for lack of parts hamstrung other auto manufacturers who have not broken with the CIO United Auto Workers. As we go to press the rumor of major settlements has not been realized.

In its struggle with management over wages, maintenance of prices and, to some extent, share in management, the CIO has made strenuous efforts to enlist public support. Its funds are not comparable with the reserves of the great corporations, who have been buying yards of newspaper space in which to present their side of the case. The union has accomplished more through the organization of committees of sympathetic citizens of prominence and public spiritedness. But the CIO played its trump card, February 9, by publishing a comparative survey of its 36 unions.

The data revealed in this survey give the lie to much of the whispering campaign against unions, which reaches new heights in times of industrial stress. It should be a shock to many management sympathizers, for instance, to find that in the great majority of CIO unions the initiation fee is less than five dollars. Or that 32 of the 36 publish detailed financial reports which are available even to the press. Or that only four of the CIO leaders receive salaries of $10,000 or more, the highest figure being Philip Murray's $20,000, which he gets as President of the United Steel Workers (he receives no compensation from the CIO itself).

Except for the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association there are no barriers of race, color, sex or creed to CIO membership. Dues generally range from $1 to $1.50 per month. There is formal accounting to members of union finances; officers for the most part are elected annually or every two years; proceedings of union conventions are available to the public. Individuals expelled from membership by their locals have the right of appeal to annual or biennial union conventions. In general, then, the CIO is essentially democratic in structure, much depending on the honesty of elections and rank and file participation.

This is the union which came into being in the early days of the New Deal and succeeded in organizing vast numbers of workers heretofore unable to make effective demands for a living wage. Which has been in the forefront for such social legislation as the Wagner Act and is even now pressing for a new wage floor of 65 cents an hour, insisting at the same time that controls be maintained over prices. It is a union which with limited funds has thrown down a challenge to our wealthiest corporations.

The CIO was the union which brought forward the Industry Councils plan, and has backed up its strictly union operations by its Political Action Committee. This latter has at times so thrown its weight around as to arouse fears of impending centralized collectivism. CIO's dynamism and promise have attracted widely divergent elements including a number of Communist Party members and sympathizers who have won key posts in the national organization and especially in certain major affiliates. This accounts in part for recourse to such dangerous acts as sympathy or general strikes. But it is undoubtedly because management senses in the CIO—if anywhere—potentialities which in time may lead to considerable revision of America's highly individualist industrial structure that its present resistance is so stiff. The CIO has a brief record of achievement; it has a structure and a technique with great potentialities for the common good. In the last analysis its future depends on the development of leaders with real vision.

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The Housing Program

THE "veterans' emergency housing program" which has been worked out by Mr. Wilson Wyatt at the behest of the President is admirable and, I believe, practicable if it receives the wholehearted support Mr. Wyatt himself states will be necessary to implement it. That Congress will pass the legislation required to back the program up is a different matter. Having had a certain amount of experience with Washington's real estate lobby, the most important single factor in which is the National Association of Real Estate Boards, I am most dubious. It is reported—with what truth one cannot tell—that the NAREB alone plans to spend five million dollars in lobbying this season, and unless this tremendous vested interest comes to see the light through fear of the shelterless veteran, it is a safe bet that Mr. Wyatt's program will be fought by it tooth and nail. Of course charity compels the admission that the public interest might temper the opposition of such groups, yet their representatives have become so used to equating their own interest with the public interest that this seems unlikely. Only genuine pressure from veterans and from the public at large will serve to counteract the sort of pressure these gentlemen are so expert at applying; once again, write your Congressman.

What especially recommends Mr. Wyatt's plan? It is the first publicly proposed—to my knowledge—which suggests serious remedies for the two principal bottlenecks standing in the way of an adequate supply of dwellings. The first bottleneck, materials, would be broken up by a system of governmental guarantees assuring the manufacturer of building materials that he could expand production with substantially no risk of loss. That was the technique used during the war with regard to airplane manufacture, and its application in the field of building materials should be even simpler since there is a huge difference between the likelihood of a continued demand for war planes and a continued demand for bricks and mortar. Hence the government need not commit itself to anything even remotely approaching its commitments in aviation, since private capital will find an expanded building materials business far more attractive than it found the aviation program. The second bottleneck, often discussed in these columns, is labor. Again Mr. Wyatt shows common sense and courage in recommending the obvious way out—a broad training program which will "triple the number of workers presently engaged in the industry."

Nor does his plan fail to take into account other, if minor, retarding factors. He urges rapid revision of building codes and even the institution of emergency codes. If such steps are taken, a great deal will have been done to break up some of the worst monopolistic tools of an industry which numbers thousands of separate and competitive members but which is in practice one of the most perfect monopolies the world has ever seen. He further recognizes the need for new land on which to build the new houses—an elementary function of planning and zoning. He proposes a far freer loan situation which would tend to break down the absurd and archaic vicious circle which has so long confronted us in home financing. And finally he realizes the necessity for holding prices down lest the whole program explode in a runaway boom as happened after the last war.

These are the specific reasons why I view his plan with such enthusiasm. Let us for a moment indulge the happy thought that something will be done about it. If something is done, the clouds of our present discontent will have not one but several silver linings. His plan potentially could do more to renovate and improve our whole conception of adequate shelter than anything that has happened since the introduction of inside plumbing. The prefabricators would have a guaranteed market for over 800,000 units in two years—for the first time in history we could really try mass production methods and we would be rid of the hurdle of public acceptance, since certainly that many purchasers are in such desperate straits that they would be only too glad to let their stylistic prejudices go if only they can find a place in which to live. The result, educationally speaking, would be revolutionary. And if all this happens, I honestly believe that the days of the Cape Cod number are really limited. Perhaps even the days of quaintness would be limited also—and the days when you bump your head against the wall in the bedrooms because the house looks nicer with a steeply pitched roof.

Coupled with this Mr. Wyatt has seen the necessity for establishing some sort of architectural bureau of standards, which I myself would prefer to see operated privately, as a form of paid insurance, but which is essential if we are to protect the public against structural and mechanical failures, especially in new media. Part of the reason we accept the Cape Cod model is that we feel secure when we look at it; we know that that sort of house has worked in the past. Since the great majority of householders cannot know anything technically about what they are buying, the necessity for such an institution is obvious but until now little admitted. In extraordinarily short compass Mr. Wyatt has made a memorable contribution to the solution of a problem we have been piling up for the last twenty years and about which we have done substantially nothing until it is almost too late.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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Brazil's New Government

An appraisal of Eurico Gaspar Dutra and his policies

Joao Gonçalves de Souza

AS MOST North Americans know, Brazil elected a new President late in 1945 who has recently been installed in office after a week's inaugural celebrations, including the presence of New York's ex-Mayor La Guardia. It is generally agreed that the election won by General Eurico Gaspar Dutra was freely held and honestly contested, and was certainly the most expressive of the popular will in Brazil's national history. But very little has been said in the United States press concerning the new President's personality and policies. Because Brazil has been going through a peculiar phase in her political history, the new path in which she is now entering is important to the entire hemisphere, for it must be remembered that next to the United States Brazil is the greatest American power.

Brazilian politics, especially on their internal level, which is by far the more difficult and the more important, are exceedingly complex. May I add that I myself had no personal connection with any of the candidates who recently ran for election in my country. I feel competent, therefore, to make a dispassionate attempt to state the general political line of the new President without either sympathies or antipathies warping my judgment.

Last summer THE COMMONWEAL published an article by my compatriot, Afranio Coutinho ("Crucial Days in Brazil," July 20, 1945) which accurately supplied the background against which last fall's political campaign was carried out. I should like to stress my own view that the régime of Getulio Vargas, so often characterized as "fascist," was in fact far more a dictatorship in the traditional Latin American pattern, a régime of personalities with one personality dominating it. Since this government took no strong ideological position, some of the things it did—imposed as they naturally were by events and by the tendencies of our moment in history—were useful and popular. Yet it became repulsive to Brazilian public opinion because the personality who headed it—Vargas—lost the sympathy both of the Army and of the Brazilian people, and because its centralizing, authoritarian and dictatorial technique of government ran counter to Brazil's historic and traditional decentralization. Moreover, our national tradition has always encouraged our youth to reflect upon and take active part in the formulation and solution of governmental problems; under Vargas a small group, monopolistically exercising power, would have nothing to do with the younger generation. The result was intense dissatisfaction among the most dynamic of our people. Finally, a new relationship was created between employers and employees under the Vargas régime. Formerly this relationship in Brazil had been more or less patriarchal. A few craft unions existed. Under the dictatorship, a single, all-enveloping labor union was created—ostensibly to protect the rights of the working classes, rights which certainly needed protection—and this union was made directly dependent and subordinate to the state machinery, in imitation of totalitarian practices elsewhere, thus surrounding the workers with a false atmosphere of freedom, of which only those subservient to the régime could really take advantage.

Hence the Brazilian situation was very complex. Vargas had actually settled none of the country's internal problems. He had allowed a devastating inflation to take place. Yet some of his government's policies were viewed as sound; the great trouble being that very few of them had gone further than words. The nation needed a change, yet evidently it needed a change in personalities even more than a change in policies. General Dutra had for years served as Vargas's Secretary of War; his candidacy was endorsed by Vargas. Yet there were many differences between the men, and evidently the greater part of the Brazilian electorate decided that Dutra was the man best fitted to do away with the abuses of the Vargas régime while implementing the best of its ideas.

Who is this Eurico Gaspar Dutra? What are his origins? What is the program which led to his election? What line is his government likely to pursue in the new turn taken by the administrative life of this great South American nation?

The Brazilian anthropologist, Roquette Pinto, in his analysis of the geographical distribution of Brazilian ethnic groups, recognizes three vast and distinct regions. The first is the area of European influence (largely Italian and German and centralized in the south); the region of the *caboclo* (the northeast, the Amazon Valley and

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the middle west, with a marked Indian strain); the zone of African influence (eastern Brazil). General Dutra originated in the *caboclo* area, having been born in the State of Mato Grasso, in the heart of the South American continent. He thus is a son of what was in his youth a frontier region, and in his temperament are reflected the physical and psychological traits of the ethnic groups from which he sprang, white and Indian. His family were middling farmers and cattle raisers. He is not a political genius, yet he is possessed of a sturdy common sense often characteristic of men reared in his circumstances. By nature he is somewhat suspicious, reserved, soft spoken and far from loquacious. His speeches are simple in expression almost to the point of seeming dull. As an administrator he has shown a preference for action rather than talk. He is almost instinctively conservative and has no use for violence as a means to dominate public opinion. He knows what he wants, and knows it clearly—perhaps the distinctive trait of his personality. No one could accuse him of being a dreamer, nor does he for an instant think that he can remedy his country's problems overnight. Possessed of a strong feeling for normal progress, he has demonstrated his ability to translate plans into action with clarity and firmness. His Maker, Who has certainly not been lavish in endowing him with attractive physical characteristics, gave him as compensation great strength of will when it comes to putting into effect whatever he believes to be necessary for the welfare of his people.

General Dutra is now approaching his sixtieth birthday. Almost fifty of his years have been spent in the Army, under the tutelage of which he went at the age of ten, by attending one of those characteristically Brazilian institutions, an army school for youth, which sprang from the essentially popular nature of the Brazilian Army and its resultant desire to make available elementary education to the less-favored boys of that country. But like most Brazilian Army officers, Dutra is no militarist. Again it must be emphasized that the main body of our armed forces and of our officer corps comes from the people, from the humblest ranks of the people.

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In the 1945 elections there were four candidates. Dutra received almost three and a half million votes. His principal opponent, Brigadier General Eduardo Gomes, the leader of the liberal opposition against President Vargas, received over two million. Yedo Fiuza, the Communist candidate, received something under six hundred thousand, and a representative of the Agrarian Party came in a very poor fourth with about ten thousand votes. Thus Brazilian public opinion, while predominantly favorable to Dutra, recorded strong support for his nearest adversary. And we must grant that in his campaign Eduardo Gomes stated ideas and principles of which we were in great need. His greatest weakness lay in his not securing the support of certain essential groups which preferred Dutra because they viewed the latter as more explicitly conservative. It must, however, be said that the difference between the two leading contenders was far more a difference of degree than of kind.

Three major forces, each of them acting of their own free will and for differing reasons, won the election for the candidate of the Social Democratic Party, the label under which General Dutra ran for election. Of these three, the first two were by far the more important. The first group consisted of those who had formerly supported the Vargas régime. The second group consisted of the mass of the rural population, predominantly Catholic and predominantly voting as a bloc. The third—and very small group—consisted of the explicitly Rightist, the *Integralistas*. To understand Dutra's probable future course of action, it is necessary to describe these three groups in somewhat greater detail.

It must be recalled that almost until the end of the Vargas régime, General Dutra served therein as Minister of War. In some ways he constituted the very backbone of that government at moments when various political groups attempted by force of arms to destroy it—the Communists in 1935 and the *Integralistas* working with democratic politicians in 1937. When Vargas realized that his personality was no longer acceptable to the Brazilian people, it was perfectly natural that he should try to secure a successor who, if not wholly continuing his policies, would at least not be wholly antipathetic to him. Dutra seemed the best choice, and Vargas endorsed him as the "candidate deserving the confidence of the Brazilian people." The ex-Minister of War has made no bones about this support, especially emphasizing it in speeches given in São Paulo and Minas Gerais, which asserted that his government would basically be no more than a "perfected continuation" of past administrations. Thus on September 29 in the capital of the State of São Paulo, discussing Brazil's fundamental problems, he said:

> Let it not be said that these have been abandoned or twisted in a wrong direction, since no one has the privilege of being the exclusive advocate of the collective good. Good sense requires us to retain and perfect all previous undertakings as long as they are not condemned by the barometer of public opinion.

Thus there are both a continuity and a compromise as between the present government and that which preceded it.

The Catholics—by which I mean the mass of

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Catholics, especially in rural districts—were the second pro-Dutra force. This does not for an instant mean that General Dutra is a Catholic and General Gomes is not. Both are strongly Catholic in their attitudes and in their actions. Both had Catholic support. And we must remember that both were appealing to a public opinion which is predominantly Catholic in its formation. But General Dutra's program was far more explicit, clear and direct with regard to his conception of the rôle of the Church in problems in which Church and State have a mutual interest than was the program of Brigadier General Gomes. In an exclusive interview given to the weekly organ of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, *A Cruz,* Dutra said (September 30):

> For clear thinking, and especially with regard to instructing legislators concerning the principles and doctrines of the Gospel—and only these principles are genuinely capable of providing a stable social structure—I view the participation of the Church not only as greatly important but even as indispensable and altogether praiseworthy.

In the São Paulo speech to which I have already alluded, Dutra characterized the Church as a genuine force "interested in the democratization of the world" within a framework of principles which make possible the "preservation of the individual, the family and society from the evils which threaten them." We should likewise remember that as Minister of War it was he who proposed to the Vargas government the organization of a chaplains' corps in our armed forces —something we had never had in our history, because of a doctrinaire view concerning the separation of Church and State. This chaplains' corps served with great heroism with our troops in Europe. And finally at our Brazilian West Point Dutra had erected a Catholic chapel so that a chaplain could officiate there regularly.

The *Integralistas* constitute a small element supporting the victorious candidate whose common ground is their fear of communism. Whereas Catholics are opposed to communism, they likewise favor a positive social program; the *Integralistas* just simply oppose communism. They voted for Dutra because he (unlike Vargas) was unqualifiedly anti-communist, whereas Gomes took a more tentative position. In the *A Cruz* interview already mentioned, he said categorically, "Like the Crusaders of old, we must fall back anew on the saying, 'God wills it,' and united and convinced have the courage to prevent a bold and active minority from trampling upon our convictions and eliminating from Brazilian life the Christian traditions which we inherit, as though in our blood, from the prayers of our mothers."

In this connection it is only fair to recall that General Dutra has frequently been accused of having acted as an open sympathizer with the totalitarian régime of the Right. I believe that this accusation was largely political propaganda intended to advantage his opponents; there are no positive facts to justify it, as has recently been pointed out by the American journalist, Kirk Bates, in the Milwaukee *Journal* (December 27, 1945). Thus when Brazilian shipping was attacked by German submarines in 1942, a year when German power was at its apogee in Europe and Africa, Dutra was one of the highly placed Brazilians who did everything he could to bring his country into the war on the side of the Allies. As Minister of War it was his task to organize and equip the Brazilian Expeditionary Force which served in Europe and demonstrated the physical and moral presence of the Latin American world in the conflict. If he had any fascist convictions, they did not prevent him from organizing as best he could forces to fight fascism and nazism. Much has been made of his having received decorations from the German Government; these were entirely due to his having obtained from the German General Staff military instructors for the Brazilian Army at a time when no one would have denied that the ablest instructors were precisely to be found in Germany.

Elected principally by these three groups, then, and it must be remembered that the first of them includes an important working class element from Vargas's trade unions, General Dutra assumes the government of his country at a moment when she desperately needs a man of clear vision and vigor. For the internal problems which confront Brazil are appalling. Her economic structure is almost completely dislocated as a result both of the war and of past administrative incompetence. The country faces uncontrolled inflation, with a high cost of living which might easily produce serious unrest. The industrial system is operating with worn-out machinery and some twenty million farmers work practically with their bare hands in a country having no heavy industry of its own. Dutra will confront a tremendous and irrational desire for *change,* change in names, in progress, in administrative methods. He will have to reconcile an embittered younger generation.

What has he promised the people? In his election platform he laid special stress on raising the living standards of both rural and urban lower classes. He promised a resolute attempt to solve one of Brazil's greatest difficulties—the geographical isolation of her five major population areas from each other and of the coastal area from the hinterland. This he proposes to do by the energetic construction of highways, railroads and waterways. The project for making a TVA out of the Valley of the São Francisco is to be energetically carried on, as well as irrigation proj-

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ects for the arid northeast. Both of the latter were dealt with in a special speech delivered in the capital of the State of Pernambuco. Dutra seeks to build up a reserve of Brazilian capital which may serve as a basis to attract foreign capital, especially from North America, so desperately needed for the proper exploitation of our human and natural resources. Moreover, he promised to encourage capital investment in industry required by our country, not merely as an adjunct to foreign economics, but for the purpose of raising the purchasing power of our people.

General Dutra's foreign policy—which obviously offers far fewer problems—is based upon the principle of continental and world collaboration, especially with the United States, prejudice against which has greatly diminished because of prompt American withdrawal from her wartime bases in Brazil.

Will Dutra be able to carry out the internal policy to which he has pledged himself? As I have said, he has the great advantage of possessing a large store of common sense. And this good sense, which has never failed him in the past, dictated that his Cabinet be made up of men honestly identified with the fundamental problems of the nation. Within the last few days the composition of this Cabinet has been announced, and it is excellent. Aided by a freshly elected Parliament containing many new faces, and keeping an ear to the groundswell of a public opinion freely able to express itself in an uncontrolled press, I feel confident that he will be able to produce the sort of government Brazil desperately needs and desires. There is only one great danger. If he has not the strength of character to resist assuming the rôle of a personal dictator, patterning himself upon the man who preceded and supported him, he is bound to fail. But so far the portents are good. Even one of the most vocal and persuasive of his opponents, the distinguished Brazilian journalist Assis Chateaubriand, has stated in *O Journal* (Rio de Janeiro, 22 January, 1946):

> It is obvious, from present realities, that no one can claim that tomorrow in the Executive Mansion General Dutra will prove a facsimile of Mr. Getulio Vargas. We see a President who has an opportunity to govern by taking advantage of those great forces which in conjunction constitute that supreme unity which is Brazil.

Crucial Question

Collectivism: Totalitarian or democratic?

Will Herberg

THE PERENNIAL goals of men in the age-old, never-ending struggle for a better world are peace, plenty and freedom—and the greatest of these is freedom. For freedom is the birthright of man as a spiritual being, the essence of his moral personality. Without freedom, peace and plenty are but the ideal virtues of a well-ordered slave plantation. The tragedy of our time is that in their desperate longing for security and material welfare, men have been willing to abjure their freedom—and so have lost all.

Is it possible to organize society in such a way as to afford security and plenty to the mass of men and yet preserve that freedom without which the rest is as nothing? This is the crucial question of our day. It is not a question that can be finally answered on the level of thought or discourse. The answer, or such answer as the question is capable of receiving, will emerge from the clash and confusion of history but since men make their own history, our beliefs and speculations may not be altogether without significance.

It is after all a condition not a theory which confronts us. Under the impact of fundamental technological and social forces, economic life has been growing increasingly collectivistic in recent decades. Its individualistic competitive features have been giving way to far-reaching corporate integration, often amounting to monopoly. Social control and governmental regulation are spreading at an increasing pace. Everywhere the process is under way and there is no turning back. Prosperity and depression, peace, war and postwar reconstruction all contribute to it. Neither America nor the world can return to the so-called "free capitalism" of a century ago. The modern industrial machine simply cannot be operated according to the old rules; it has burst the institutional framework of private capitalism and laissez-faire. A new system of institutional controls is springing up, basically collectivist in character.

What is the logic of this process? What does it mean for the life of man? The outcome of unimpeded collectivist development is *statism*—

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a state-planned, state-controlled, state-operated economy, whether of the Soviet type with private capitalism eliminated or the nazi type with private capitalism retained as window-dressing matters little. It is statism in any case, and statism is the economic face of totalitarianism.

It would take me too far afield to examine the rise and development of totalitarianism in our civilization.[1] The core of the idea is the identification of the state with society and the denial of any autonomy whatever either to the individual or to non-state associations. Under totalitarianism, the state penetrates into every aspect of human life, assumes control over every interest, organizes every activity. Every human concern becomes the concern of society and therefore of the state, is "coordinated" by the state and administered by state agencies. From birth till death, the subject of the totalitarian state has his life regulated for him by the higher powers. There is no escape, no refuge. It is the most complete slavery known to man.

Totalitarianism finds in thoroughgoing collectivism its appropriate economic base, for through collectivism it is enabled to establish the control of the state over the entire economic life of the nation and to bring about the merger of economic and political power in the hands of the same group. The "natural" logic of thoroughgoing collectivism is totalitarian slavery.

Yet the collectivist tendency, as we have seen, is the work of deep-lying forces that we can hardly expect to reverse. Must we then confess ourselves hopelessly trapped in a predicament without issue? In order to run our economic machine must we institute controls that add up to totalitarianism? In order to gain bread must we surrender freedom?

I do not think so. I believe another way is possible, a way of combining bread and freedom, of gaining the one without losing the other. Economic necessity does indeed require some sort of social control of the economic process, some degree of collective organization of economic life—that is, some measure of collectivism—but this collectivism need not be statist and hence need not be totalitarian. The collectivist current may, I believe, be directed into democratic channels.

Let me say at once that when I speak of democratic collectivism I do not refer to the widespread view that an all-embracing collectivism can be kept democratic merely by overhead popular control. I regard this notion as dangerously delusive for it ignores entirely the close connection between economics and politics that history and experience have taught us to recognize. When I speak of democratic collectivism, I mean something altogether different, something which I can perhaps best describe by indicating a number of the basic conditions which a collectivist economy would have to meet in order to remain democratic:

1. If it is to be compatible with democracy, collectivism must be conceived not as an end in itself but merely as an institutional device to serve under the given circumstances. Hence it must never be pushed for its own sake beyond necessity. In every case, the question should be: Are collectivist controls required to promote the possibilities of the good life for the members of the community? Are they the only possible means to attain the desired end?

2. A democratic collectivism is *pluralistic*. It rejects the attempt to force a uniform pattern on all economic life and aims at a decentralized mixed economy, a balance of diverse economic forms, state and non-state. It takes to heart this profoundly pertinent warning sounded by Charles Beard:[2]

> If there are no individual or group economic interests possessing a high degree of independence as against the state, despotism will replace constitutional government and then run its own historic course.

The emphasis on pluralism is crucial. Government ownership is not the only alternative to individual private enterprise, as many writers would seem to imply.[3] Between the two extremes, there is a wide variety of forms, such as cooperatives, "guilds," public corporations and the like, upon which a democratic collectivism would primarily build.

3. Democratic collectivism must afford the producers ample opportunity through their own independent (non-state) organizations to share in the determination of the conditions of their labor. Trade unionism and collective bargaining are an elementary form of economic democracy but however elementary, they can never be entirely superseded.

4. Democratic collectivism must preserve inviolate the fundamental personal and minority rights without which democracy is a mere mockery. It must provide institutional machinery for resistance to and control of arbitrary power.

Naturally I cannot here go into any detail as to the features of such an economy. But I can refer the reader to the remarkable book by Lewis

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[1] I have given a brief sketch of this development in the article, "Personalism Against Totalitarianism," *Politics*, December, 1945.

[2] Charles A. Beard: "The Economic Basis of Politics" (1945 edition), p. 113.

[3] Unclarity on this point seems to me to mar the otherwise excellent article by George H. Dunne, "Socialism and Socialism," THE COMMONWEAL, November 23, 1945. Father Dunne repeatedly speaks of "community ownership" in a way that would imply that only government ownership is conceivable and the examples he gives rather strengthens the impression.

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Corey, "The Unfinished Task."[4] Corey emphasizes that "an absolute 'planned economy' is of necessity totalitarian" and stresses the totalitarian potential in government ownership and large-scale control of economic life. He urges the necessity of a free market, the "supreme merit" of which, he tells us, "is its objective economic controls that reduce to a minimum the direct administrative controls which endanger freedom and personality." He outlines with care a pluralistic economy, avoiding bureaucratic centralization and the concentration of economic power in the hands of the state by diffusing it among a variety of public and quasi-public institutions, voluntary groups and even, as in agriculture and small business, among private enterprisers. A notable feature of his scheme is a new system of checks and balances, based on the effective social power of such non-state associations as trade unions and cooperative societies. In this way he hopes to obtain mastery over the collectivist current and direct it to democratic purposes.

In criticizing an article of mine dealing with this subject, Philip Burnham, in a recent issue of this publication,[5] questions the practicability of this strategy:

> As a proposition to be considered (he writes) isn't it possible that directing the collectivist current into democratic channels might prove quite as difficult a job as breaking that current up into a plurality of less overwhelming floods that could more readily be used for the cultivation and irrigation of a genuinely humane landscape?

From what I have already said I think it is clear that there really is no difference between us: what Mr. Burnham calls breaking that (collectivist) current up into a plurality of less overwhelming floods is precisely what I have in mind when I speak of a pluralistic democratic collectivism.

But is it socialism?, Mr. Burnham also asks. It will be noticed that I have not hitherto used this term. I may now define it as democratic collectivism. Mr. Burnham thinks this definition rather arbitrary:

> It seems to me (he says) to make the word socialism a fetish when a pluralist, personalist régime is given that name.

This is a terminological dispute of no very great importance. But I think I may claim the sanction of tradition for my usage. Socialism has never meant simply statist collectivism and nothing else. Witness such designations as "anarchistic socialism," "guild socialism," etc. And socialism from the first has had a strong personalist strain; it arose in the modern world as a protest against bourgeois society for enslaving man and turning him into a thing, into a depersonalized adjunct of the machine. My usage has the merit, therefore, of attempting to conserve the genuine values of socialism in the new pluralist synthesis.

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At any rate, we know what we are basically after: a balanced combination of state action on the one hand and corporative and individual action on the other, *with the presumption always in favor of the latter.* The last phrase is important; it means that whenever individual or voluntary group effort can accomplish the purpose, the state is to keep out. The implications of this position are far-reaching. I think I can best illustrate the idea by taking an example of "collectivism" outside the economic sphere, the institution of public education. The theory behind public education is very different in the United States and Great Britain from what it is on the Continent, and the difference is instructive. In England and America, the government engages in public education because experience has shown that this is the only way to provide adequate educational opportunities for the mass of the people; the government is obliged to do what individual and group effort has not been able to do. But wherever individuals or groups can offer the proper facilities, they not only have the right to compete with the government but they have (or should have) a prior claim and are entitled to the help and encouragement of the public authorities. In other words, the Anglo-American system is pluralistic. In France and in other Continental countries, on the other hand, the concept of public education, at least as held by its accredited champions, is something altogether different. Public education is there looked upon not as a device for making up for the inadequacies of individual or group effort but as a "natural" activity of the state designed primarily to inculcate a common doctrine and create a uniform mentality among the citizens. From this point of view, private individuals and non-state institutions really have no business in the field of education; they are rivals of the state and such rivalry is intrinsically "anti-social," even though under the circumstances it may have to be grudgingly tolerated. I submit that this doctrine, despite its popularity among Continental liberals and socialists, is essentially totalitarian.

This distinction is deep and far-reaching. It is actually a distinction between two basically opposed conceptions, each claiming the name and sanction of democracy. One is monolithic and uniformitarian: it exalts the People (or rather

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[4] Lewis Corey, "The Unfinished Task" (1942). A very different but also non-totalitarian program is developed by Abba Lerner in his book, "The Economics of Control" (1944).

[5] "What Language," THE COMMONWEAL, January 25, 1946. The article of mine which Mr. Burnham comments upon is the one mentioned above, "Personalism Against Totalitarianism," *Politics*, December, 1945.

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the state as the incarnation of the People) into a sacred, infallible and omnipotent master; it decries all pretension of individuals or minorities to rights against the state and strives to wipe out all individuality, all difference and variety, so as to reduce everything to standardized and regimented uniformity in the name of equality and national solidarity. The other conception is pluralistic and libertarian: it thinks in terms of individuals and groups; it guarantees personal and minority rights and encourages individuality, self-help and voluntary group effort. The former, with roots in the Rousseauistic "general will," finds ultimate expression in the modern mass-despotisms of the totalitarian type; the latter is the conception of democracy in the Anglo-American liberal tradition. The distinction is directly relevant to the economic sphere and marks the difference between totalitarian and democratic collectivism.

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The problem we have been considering is at bottom an aspect of the eternal problem of reconciling freedom with organization. It is a problem to which there is no final solution because social organization is in its very nature ambivalent: without organization effective freedom is impossible, yet organization always imperils and to some degree thwarts human freedom. Man can fulfil himself only in society, but ultimately he "transcends all temporal societies and is superior to them."[6]

Whatever accord may at any time be reached between the individual and society, it can never result in a final harmony. The best that can ever be achieved is a tentative, provisional balance, no sooner established than revealing its own contradictions, inadequacies and shortcomings. History teaches us through many a painful experience that the attempt to stabilize a system, no matter how just and free, as final and perfect, inevitably means the stabilization of the unfreedom and injustice within it. This lesson of humility is indispensable as a curb on the devouring pride of the idealist and the boundless self-assurance of the reformer.

Amidst the incessant flux and reflux of social action, where every landmark is established only to be swept away, what is to guide us and keep us true to the goal? As I see it, there is only the personalist principle of the unique and transcendent worth of every human soul, the principle that makes reverence for personality the end and touchstone of human endeavor.

[6] Jacques Maritain, "The Rights of Man," p. 13.

The Loan to Britain

Our terms are impossible, but the British have little choice

J. L. Benvenisti

BY THE TIME these lines are in print, Congress will either have approved or rejected the British loan, or will at any rate be on the point of doing one of these things. It really doesn't very much matter which it does, and most thoughtful people in Britain have become surprisingly indifferent to the nature of their decision.

We know that for us it is a choice of evils. If the loan is refused, the hardships imposed, will, after six years of war, be well-nigh unbearable. If it is granted on the conditions now laid down, our economic decline will be somewhat deferred, but we shall ultimately be faced with the alternative of naked slavery, or the loss of our honor through default.

This last consideration led the Catholic press in this country pretty whole-heartedly to urge the rejection of the whole arrangement when it was debated here in Parliament, and I think they are right. If the loan is rejected we shall at least keep our hands clean, and after all, there is quite a little to be said for that.

These are brutal words. But the facts are too glaring for an honest man to evade them. In previous articles I have tried to show how the Bretton Woods provisions, which are an integral part of the whole bargain, are likely to affect us, and how, in the long run, the principles underlying them will probably prove as disastrous to America as to ourselves. I will not weary you further with that now. Here I am concerned with the loan itself and the provisions for interest and repayment.

These provisions involve a burden upon us of some $140 million a year which we must pay you in gold or dollars. It is true that that part of the sum which reflects pure interest may be waived if we are unable to find it, but presumably you do expect us to find it, save in very exceptional cir-

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cumstances. Moreover, this burden, as I shall point out in a moment, is superimposed on a number of other burdens which American policy has at any rate helped to load on our shoulders. So that, even if this newest and latest burden is in some years halved, our backs will still be broken by it.

Well, $140 million a year may sound a trifling sum compared with the astronomical figures of wartime budgeting. But it is not trifling, for this money has got to be earned by foreign trade.

Now, here let me clear up a very common misunderstanding. To pay you $140 million a year, we must increase our trade by much more than $140 million. When we export a product we must purchase a great part of the raw materials abroad, and in some cases we must purchase the product itself abroad in a semi-manufactured state. It follows that every increase in our exports means an increase in our imports. We are therefore faced with the desperate necessity of increasing our foreign trade by a much greater sum than that which we are compelled to pay you.

But this is not our only difficulty. At the beginning of the war we were compelled to make over to you a great part of our foreign investments, which were accepted by you as payment for the munitions you supplied. It was the return on these investments that before the war paid for a large part of our imports, and I must remind you that if we cannot pay for a sufficiency of imports we lack the bare necessities of life. So here, too, we must increase our foreign trade and, for the reason explained in the preceding paragraph, must increase it by a far greater sum than the interest on the investments which have now passed out of our hands.

We might perhaps have expected that these facts should have been taken into consideration by your negotiators, and that after we had fought together in a common cause some restitution might even have been made to us. It has recently been pointed out that at the Nuremberg trials the prosecutors were at pains to prove that the war was planned and may even be said to have started not in 1939, but with Hitler's advent to power in 1933. From the financial point of view, it does not seem to have started until 1941.

Let us therefore deal with things as they are and see where we stand, and let me try and measure for you the effort we have got to make in order to achieve bare survival. If no aid is granted to us we shall certainly starve. If it is granted on the terms proposed, then the burden of servicing the loan and the necessity of making up for our lost investment revenue, make it imperative for us to increase our exports to an amount which, calculated at 1938 prices, is now generally computed as seventy-five per cent above the 1938 level.

Well, what are our chances? If such an increase is possible at all, it can only be effected by an increase in our exports of manufactured goods, for an increase in such products as coal is beyond the bounds of practical possibility. And in any case it is manufactured goods that are the staple of our trade.

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Now, before the war British exports of manufacturers constituted about one-fifth of the world's total, so if we are to make the grade one of two things must happen. Either we must, despite fierce American competition, raise our share of the world's trade from one-fifth to two-fifths, or the total volume of the world's trade must be doubled.

The elimination of Germany and Japan from among our competitors might make the first of these alternatives conceivable, though very unlikely. The second alternative with Europe shot to pieces and the Far East in ruins, is unthinkable.

I am, of course, aware that the world is crying out for goods, but the world has been doing that since the days of Adam. The trouble is that the world lacks the means of payment, and, unlike America, we are not in a position to trade except for cash.

Let us, however, suppose that the miracle happens, and that in some way or other we contrive to achieve our export target—what then? The answer is, that if indeed this were to happen, then the devotion of such a large proportion of our national effort to exports would in the circumstances of the post-war world impose an intolerable strain on our economy.

This can be seen very clearly if we look at the problem in terms of manpower, and in point of fact, expert attempts have recently been made to approach it along these lines by the *Economist,* working on figures compiled by the London and Cambridge Economic Service. It is a very good line of approach, for the problem of maintaining ourselves and at the same time honoring all our commitments is at bottom essentially a physical one. It is a problem of machines, muscles and calory intake, and the question of whether we can solve it or not can be answered by a relatively simple calculation.

May I ask the reader's indulgence here for going a little bit statistical on him. But it is only by means of incontrovertible arithmetic that I can drive home the real facts of the matter.

We had before the war so-and-so many men and women at work in such-and-such different kinds of jobs, and we know the volume of goods and services thus produced. Since we can make a reasonable estimate of probable technological progress between say, 1938 and 1950, we can tell what re-shuffling of workers from one cate-

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gory to another the new circumstances will entail, and can gauge the effect of this upon our general way of life.

Here is a table showing the numbers of men and women of all ages who were doing some kind of work before the war, and the kind of work on which they were employed.

Armed Forces	355,000
Supply of Munitions, etc.	830,000
Public Employment	1,330,000
Export	1,875,000
Capital Goods	3,105,000
Consumption	12,735,000
Total Employed	20,230,000
Unemployed	2,210,000
Total Labor Force	22,440,000

Now what are the shifts in our labor force which the new conditions, political and economic, will occasion? Let us take the different categories in the order of the above table, and see how each will be affected.

Armed Forces. At the time of writing, we have no notion what our peacetime armed strength is going to be. It will obviously depend upon the international situation. The figure generally accepted until recently was two million. Let us make it one million five hundred thousand. It may appear strange to you that a comparatively small country like Britain should be as ambitious as that, but there is no question here of ambition. It is a matter of security. Our geographical position makes us infinitely more vulnerable then America, and we must maintain, if we are to count for anything at all in the councils of the world, a front-line strength that is, in relation to the numbers of our population, very great indeed. So let us write down an increase of about a million over the 1938 figure under this head.

Munitions. For the purpose of this calculation, we need not assume that there must be an increase in those employed in the munitions industries. In 1938 Britain was actively re-arming, and if the volume of her output needs to be larger than in that year we can leave the increase in productivity to take care of that.

Public Employment. Unless every promise made to the nation during the war is to be contemptuously broken, a substantial increase in the numbers in public employment is inevitable. Ampler educational opportunity, better Public Health services—these are things to which the people of this country now claim that they have earned an inviolable right. In a previous article I have already shown how wide the gap between promise and performance is likely to be in these matters. A complete dishonoring of the promise is an outrage to which the people of this country would not submit—nor should they be asked to do so. Some increase under this head there is therefore bound to be, and the very least we can allow for is two hundred thousand.

Export Industries. If, thanks to a miracle, we contrive to get the necessary business that would enable us to achieve our export target, it is these industries which will make the greatest physical demand of all. We must, if you will remember, increase our exports by seventy-five per cent, and that means a seventy-five per cent increase in manpower, except in so far as this figure can be modified by the growth in productivity per head over the period in question. If we allow a twenty per cent increase in productivity, you will find that to achieve a seventy-five per cent increase in the volume of output over 1938 approximately eleven hundred thousand additional workers will be needed in the export industries.

Capital Goods Industries. If the increased productivity to which reference was made in the preceding paragraph is to be achieved, and if we are to trade at competitive prices, we must re-equip and re-organize our entire industry, and this, together with the crying needs of the housing problem, which has been unbearably intensified by enemy bombing, means that the volume of output in the capital goods industries will also have to be very substantially increased. If we only assume the necessity of a one-third increase in this volume of output, and this is very modest, and again allow for a twenty per cent increase in productivity, then these industries will demand at least another seven hundred and fifty thousand workers.

Now let us cast the account and see where we end up:

Armed Forces—	(necessary increase)	1,000,000
Public Employment	" "	200,000
Export Industries	" "	1,100,000
Capital Goods Industries	" "	750,000
		3,050,000

So the position is that we need three million more workers in the industries referred to above. Now the 1938 table showed us two million unemployed, and at first sight it would appear that we are only about a million men short. But this is an illusion. First of all, under conditions of laissez-faire, we shall always have about half a million unemployed. This figure will include men who are sick, changing their jobs, laid off for short periods, unemployables, and so on. But a further reduction will be brought about by the raising of the school-leaving age, and the changing age-distribution of the population, and in actual fact the reserve of workers of employable age over and above the inevitable unemployed is not likely by 1950 to exceed seven hundred and fifty thousand. So we are well over two million workers short. From where are we to take them? Quite obviously, we have got to take them out of

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the consumption industries. Even if our supposed increase of two hundred thousand in the Public Services were wiped out, it is still the consumption industries that will have to be mulcted.

Well, let us again stick to our figure of twenty per cent for the assumed increase in productivity. Let us also assume that we will withdraw the necessary workers from the consumption goods industries and feed them into the other industries, which will demand these increases in their labor forces. In that case, we should just barely achieve the volume of production in the consumption goods industries which was attained in 1938.

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But—and this is a very big but—in 1938 we had two million unemployed, and it was part of our accepted scheme of values that an unemployed man should starve, or come very near to doing so. With a smaller number of unemployed, the average man in work would not only be no better off than before the war, he would be appreciably worse off than in 1938, in which year, it has been competently estimated, approximately fifty per cent of the nation was suffering from varying degrees of malnutrition.

Now, I ask Americans quite calmly whether they think that such a state of things is going to be tolerated by a free society. And if they don't think that, I ask them whether they are prepared to face up to the inevitable implications of this matter. For ultimately there is only one way of cracking down on the standard of living and simultaneously maximizing output. It is by some system of totalitarian slavery. If that is what Americans want, then let them say so, and let them, for Heaven's sake, stop bemoaning the fact, which at the moment is very far indeed from being a fact, that free institutions in Britain are on the decline.

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I have stated the brutal realities of this matter, and I have tried to do so without bitterness or passion, for I do not believe that a single reader of these lines would conduct his private business on the principles which are apparently to govern the dealings between our respective Governments.

I have several times tried to analyze the reason for this curious discrepancy between public and private morality, a discrepancy all the more remarkable since, as I have often shown, the ungenerous course is in this case the very one that will in the long run be ruinous to American interests. I still believe that the cause lies simply in a deficiency of knowledge, a deficiency which under the democratic process inevitably gets exploited in order to score points in the political game. In such circumstances the task of the journalist can only be to use every opportunity to hammer home the truth, and the truth is what I have tried to tell you in this article.

The Stage & Screen

Born Yesterday

TO GIVE Garson Kanin his due as writer and director of this neat feat should not take too long. Here is an immediately satisfactory evening: expert casting, setting and playing, all pointing a smart script. Compacted out of Bulfinch again (see Mr. Shaw at the Barrymore), the story gives us a young intellectual, reporter for the *New Republic,* hired by a junkman World-War-Lord to refine his girl for Washington big business, and thereafter it travels through as rapid and riotous a primer of democracy as could possibly justify the happy ending. The title to this one is accurate. I think Mr. Kanin's third act jerks somewhat; the fine line drawn earlier between situation (often serious) and punctuation (always a laugh) seems here to disappear and the dialogue slides into a series of gags. However, it's all pretty funny in any case, and by the device of allowing his hero sufficient brain to assume a *status query* rather than *quo* in relation to the workings of this republic, the conclusions seem fairly adult. Judy Holliday in the appealing rôle of the small blonde who surrenders to wearing glasses in order to investigate Sibelius (why that, I wonder), as well as all of the newssheets and the Britannica, is exactly perfect. Technically her projection of her ridiculous voice, infinitestimal sighs and puzzled pauses is fascinating to watch, and since this virtuosity is intelligent and grounded in emotional subtlety, the performance is very fine, a complete success. I hope she will not be too repetitiously written from now on. The rest of the players match: Paul Douglas's violent moneyman, Frank Otto's miniscule henchman, Otto Hulett's artful drunk, Gary Merrill's quiet reporter. (*At the Lyceum.*)

January Thaw

A TICKET tangle, engineered by the Todd office, left me down the street from this William Roos adaptation of Bellamy Partridge's best-selling novel on second night. However, the notes of my steadfast reporter are as follows: "frost, no thaw; maybe without incessant references to plumbing could be Little Theater stuff; Charles Middleton and Helen Carew both good; audience laughed and laughed." (*At the Golden.*)

Apple of His Eye

I THINK to detail Walter Huston starring in no play by Kenyon Nicholson and Charles Robinson, with no direction by Jed Harris, and a good many good people with nothing to work with, is too sad a Sunday chore for anyone. (*At the Biltmore.*)

Lute Song

QUITE frankly I lasted for one act of five scenes of this particolored arrangement during which time Mary Martin in a black-lacquer wig and shine-pink make-up sang some modified jazz including a pidgin English number called "Monkey See, Monkey Do" to paper

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applause. McKay Morris in a three-way beard, Rex O'Malley in cardboard pigtails, Clarence Derwent in a satin belly-band, Yul Brynner in a skull-cap, were all respectively inarticulate, Cockney, windy and Russian. The rest, approximately a hundred, purled in and out Robert Edmond Jones's stupendous draperies waving fans, flags, banners, swords, streamers and parasols, and as many hands as possible, to the air of some wetern flute. Perhaps for anyone over forty-five, the quality of this kind of gorgeousness may stimulate a nostalgia for the "terrific twenties." I can't see that it is either Chinese, classical, or worthy of respect. (*At the Plymouth.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Crime Does Not

OBVIOUSLY acting on the dictum that a thrill a day keeps the psychiatrist away, the movies go to town this week in trying to put psychiatrists out of business. Thrills, horror, terror, murder pile up in a large selection of new films; you hardly have to shop around to find your favorite kind of lethal madness.

The best of the lot, and one of the best films of the season, is *"The Spiral Staircase."* While Mel Dinelli's script (based on "Some Must Watch," by Ethel Lima White) is a little too crowded and the story, including the identity of the murderer, is rather obvious, the picture's direction, acting, and sets are so good that you are kept in a state of frigid fear. Furthermore, through a novel device you are practically compelled to participate in what's going on: the heroine, played to perfection by Dorothy McGuire, is a mute, and, since no sound comes from her mouth as terror mounts and violence approaches, you find yourself doing her screaming. There are plenty of such moments for the poor girl works, in a house quivering with hatred, as a companion to its batty, bedridden mistress. Although this rôle is somewhat confining for Ethel Barrymore, she gives her all in facial expressions and gestures; and the Barrymore voice is at its sonorous best as she says to her son: "There's always trouble when you come home, Stephen. I don't like you; I never have." Toward her stepson (George Brent) she is less vitriolic, but she really cares for no one except the mute girl whom she tries to persuade to leave this unholy place. Downstairs the stepson is having worries of his own, for handsome Stephen (Gordon Oliver), a cad and a bounder, is making advances to the secretary (Rhonda Fleming).

The action of "The Spiral Staircase" takes place in New England, late one day in 1906; grim proceedings are heightened by stormy Poesque exteriors and even more gloomy Victorian interiors. Director Robert Siodmak takes every advantage of situation, cast and setting to keep you on edge; perhaps too much happens and too fast. He even uses cinema tricks, but uses them exceedingly well in a way that no other art can duplicate. When the mute girl dreamily imagines her wedding to the young doctor (Kent Smith) who hopes to cure her, she suddenly realizes she cannot say "I do," and the other members of the house, assembled as guests, try to speak for her. Miss McGuire makes the sequence tremble with straining effort and shame while the soundtrack reverberates with "I do." Another effective device is our seeing the murderer during the first half of the film only through a close-up of an eye—an eye which finally views its next victim as a girl without a mouth. Even if you think you guess the guilty one in this tense drama (and there are plenty of choices in a fine cast which also includes Sara Allgood, Elsa Lanchester and Rhys Williams) this remains a first-rate example of a movie thriller.

You won't be able to spot the killer quite so easily in *"Deadline at Dawn,"* but neither will the pic. give you so many chills. It has its moments of suspense however; in fact the whole plot is one prolonged question: who killed Edna Bartelli? Alex, a sailor on leave in New York, wants to know and feels that he better find out before his bus leaves at six a.m. because he thinks he may have done it. Now if ever there was an innocent lamb in bell-bottomed trousers, it's Alex; and Bill Williams plays the rôle with dewy-eyed naïveté that's a delight to watch. Before he gets the answer to the $64 question, Alex collects quite a group of typical New Yorkers; some are being helpful, some are concerned about Edna (and themselves) and some are just curiosity seekers. This collection includes a blasé ten-cents-a-dancer (Susan Hayward), a philosophical taxi driver (Paul Lukas), Edna's brother—a gangster type (Joseph Calleia), a young wife (Osa Massen) whose husband was attracted by Edna's dubious charms, and various other people of mixed reputation. By this time you gather that Edna (played by Lola Lane until she gets bumped off) was a pretty rough customer, and probably deserved what she got. The film's opening scene (in which this floozy greets her ex-husband with "Why, Sleepy Parsons, aren't you dead yet?") leads one to believe the worst. The dialogue is full of New Yorkese, some on the Damon Runyon pattern, some redolent with social significance and exclamations about the lack of logic in this crazy city. Since Clifford Odets wrote the script and Harold Clurman directed, these touches of meaning behind the scene could be expected. Unfortunately they give this thriller an arty note, which in spite of the film's good points, becomes also a phony note.

"Woman Who Came Back," an unpretentious item about a woman who thinks she is a witch, is another example of cinema's ability to build up an allusion of reality out of very little. A simple story by John Kafka, some good New England exteriors and a few plain interiors, a cast willing to follow Producer-Director Walter Colmes's instructions for performances without histrionics—all combine to make a picture that succeeds in casting a spell. Lorna Webster (Nancy Kelly), sick and nervous after a dreadful bus accident in which she was the only survivor, is certain that she is possessed. Her fears become worse when she thinks she is the cause of a series of minor mishaps which could be perfectly natural. But when the townsfolk agree that Lorna is a witch, in spite of protests from her doctor (John Loder) and the minister (Otto Kruger), the situation grows acute and finally leads to violence. The most interesting scene is one of mass hysteria directed against Lorna—and

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starting, of all places, in a church on Sunday. If this fascinating little exercise in psychology and superstition is on the other half of your double bill don't walk out on it.

The same cannot be said of *"Dick Tracy,"* which is a screen version of the adventures of the famous cartoon-strip dick. This was probably designed for kiddies, but it is so full of murders and macabre scenes like the hide-and-go-seek in a funeral parlor that it will most likely scare the shorts right off of youngsters. Morgan Conway plays Dick in the same handsome, solid forthright manner that has made the newspapers' Tracy such an idol. The casting of Mike Mazurki as Splitface was sheer genius. Maybe I'm wrong about the whole thing; maybe this is just the kind of a picture that the well dressed juvenile delinquent is attending these days. Maybe it's what the graduate delinquents like too.

It is unfortunate that *"Scarlet Street"* received so much extra-curricular publicity through the censor boards, because it is really a trite and vulgar film unworthy of the fuss it's causing. Its theme is tawdry, and it has a few sensational scenes; but its conclusion is definitely crime-does-not-pay for its three principals come to a very bad end indeed. The story is as old as the hills and has been covered by cheap Sunday supplements and movies as far back as Theda Bara's "A Fool There Was." Last year Producer-Director Fritz Lang and the leading players in this picture did a similar piece more convincingly in "The Woman in the Window." In this version, a tired, middle-aged cashier (Edward G. Robinson), henpecked by a nasty, nagging wife (Rosalind Ivan) whom he should have left long ago, sets up a love nest in Greenwich Village with a dame (Joan Bennett) he picked up one night. This glamor-puss is repelled by the advances of the naïve cashier, but is spurred on to get all she can out of him by the cheap chiseler (Dan Duryea) with whom she is madly in love. The young couple think the old guy, who is an amateur painter, has dough and is a great artist. The joke is on all three of them, for in the film's most interesting scenes, it turns out that this budding artist is a primitive painter of real merit; and his pictures, which we actually see, prove to be the movie's greatest asset. But art of this kind does not make a movie. Although the New York setting (1934) is realistic, the acting and direction lack the distinction one has the right to expect from Lang and this noteworthy cast. And the script by Dudley Nichols hardly seems the work of this perceptive screenwriter. I wish however he had retained the appropriate and descriptive title of the story on which this film was based: "La Chienne."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

Reuther and the Ability to Pay

WALTER REUTHER is only human. Therefore it would be foolish to maintain that he had done a perfect job in pleading the case of the United Auto Workers, CIO, against the executives of General Motors and assorted du Ponts. For example, he might have been less bitter. He might have left most of the fancier name-calling to bystanders like the editors of THE COMMON-

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WEAL. When you are dealing with people as rich and powerful and important as the men who control the destinies of General Motors, you should try to make it as easy as possible for them to yield to common sense, the public welfare, elementary justice, the President of the United States and their own pocketbooks. The Japanese are not the only people in the world with faces to save.

One mistake Reuther did not make, however, was to claim, as his enemies charge, that ability to pay is the only real issue in the dispute. Perhaps he harped a little too long and loud on GM's refusal to open its books. It is as though a debater seized upon a major weakness in his opponent's argument and belabored it so vigorously that many in the audience—especially those who came in late or slept during the early part of the evening—went home with the idea that that one point was the sum total of his case.

Of course, GM and friends have done everything they could to spread this idea and in so doing have erected the flimsiest possible straw man, which they have proceeded to demolish with devastating analogies about charging a man for licorice sticks or whatnot according to the size of his wallet. Reason positively reels and totters and almost falls at the sheer foolishness of the spectacle. And what is particularly discouraging is that some Catholics have actually been taken in by this propaganda, including the president of the Catholic Economics Association.

The basic ingredient in Reuther's case, as in labor's case generally right now, is this. The elimination of overtime has dropped weekly take-home pay below the requirements of a decent, adequate living wage. It's as simple as that. Furthermore it will be impossible for American industry to maintain full employment unless those employers who can afford it, such as GM, balance the severe drop in national purchasing power with a sizable increase in hourly rates. The President's fact-finding board has recommended, not 30 per cent as demanded by the UAW, but 17.5 per cent. The union has accepted. GM has rejected the recommendation. On what possible leg do they stand to do so? For if the richest, fattest corporation in the world can't be asked to pay a living wage, then who, in the name of all that's sensible, can be asked?

Of course, what has curdled GM's blood more than anything else in Reuther's lively performance has been his insistence on no price increases. In fact, blood has been curdling all over the lot on this score. At the recent ill-fated labor-management conference in Washington the business spokesmen were most insistent that the fixing of prices was a sacred prerogative of management and far beyond the pale of collective bargaining. Fortunately, the labor representatives did not agree to this Manchesterian heresy, in spite of the fact that John L. Lewis made a speech that said in effect: "What do I care how much the public is soaked for coal as long as the Mine Workers get theirs?" It is also reported that Phil Murray, CIO president, has urged Reuther to worry more about getting a good raise and let the OPA do the worrying about prices.

Murray may be right. But who is going to uphold poor battered Mr. Bowles if labor doesn't? The fact is, Reuther should get some kind of medal for dramatizing the basic and tremendous fact that prices and profits are, and must be, almost as much part of labor's business as wages themselves.

It stands to reason that if every general increase in wage levels is matched by a general rise in prices, labor will be reduced to the status of a mangy dog chasing its tail around and around in circles. And what is the good of hoisting wages if prices are hoisted so high that customers refuse to buy and the job that pays the wage is eliminated? There is naturally a lot of talk about how, when production really gets boiling again, prices will be forced down by a flood of competing products. This may be true in some consumer goods, but it is certainly not true in the capital goods field, which is the soul of the economy and in which the anti-trust laws have been most ineffective in stopping monopoly tendencies (viz. GM) and collusive price-fixing. In other words, we don't have a really free, competitive economy, haven't had one for years and years and years, and the sooner we face it the better. When OPA is abolished, we'll have to face it.

So if prices are labor's business, then profits must clearly be labor's business too. For the only reason prices go up is to protect the employer's margin of profit. If that margin is fair, just and reasonable, then the increase may be necessary. If it is not just, then all sorts of hideous evils flow from it as from a veritable Pandora's box of hideous evils. The employer's soul is endangered, to begin with, and perhaps to end with. If the practice is widespread, which it is, then too much money is taken from those who spend it because they need things and given to those who save it because they have much more than they need, or is good for them, already.

The result is depression and unemployment for the very simple reason that there aren't customers to buy what is being produced. And no amount of foreign markets or government spending is going to cure the root causes of this dread disease.

So it boils down to this: what is a fair profit? What is a just and reasonable profit? How shall we determine it? And having determined it, how shall we enforce it? Unless we find an answer to these questions, and soon, American democracy will surely die. We can no longer afford to allow American employers to be exposed to such overpowering temptations.

JOHN C. CORT.

Books of the Week

My One Contribution to Chess. F. V. Morley. Huebsch. $2.00.

"...A DROMENON is a pattern of dynamic expression in which the performers express something larger than themselves, beyond their powers of speech to express, and a therapeutic rhythm in which they find release and fulfillment." Mr. Morley quotes from Jane Harrison's "Ancient art and ritual." And, for him, chess is the perfect dromenon.

His enchanting book certainly proves his point, but it also proves that the author is a phenomenon. For today, a truly civilized person, who is also literate, humorous and compassionate, is that; and, when he can put himself, his whole philosophy of life, and his family across to his readers—even when they don't know one thing about chess—in such a slim volume he is something more.

Mr. Morley opens his book with a bang. With an epoch-making, revolutionary suggestion. Do not alter the chessmen, or the game, he says. But what about the

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board? Why not add to it, just one square? Widen the board with but a little lane, a tiny corridor, five squares long, and one wide! And having thus flung open every window in chess history—which is as long or longer than human history, an immensity only to be measured astronomically—he quietly begins to reminisce, to tell the story of his own arrival at the chessboard (old style) and of his adventures there.

He draws the sleepy Suffolk town of Woodbridge, with his father and aunts living there, in mid-nineteenth century, a landscape with figures that in economy and piety is Chinese, yet has a sturdy Englishry that recalls the Suffolk punches—the big solid cart-horses with furry fetlocks, so beloved of the painter Stubbs. And he has a sense of the East Anglian sky and space that would have pleased John Constable, for whom the flat, watery fen scenes were always javelined by tall sensitive church spires that "left the earth to lose themselves in the sky."

It is pleasant to think of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyan getting written at Woodbridge, and to read Mr. Morley's account of Edward FitzGerald: "a familiar figure in the town, with his green Irish cape, flowered satin waistcoat, an old pair of slippers on his feet, and, if the East wind was blowing, a silk handkerchief tied over his hat and under his chin. Thackeray and Spedding, and, more frequently, Carlyle and the Tennysons, were visitors who came to stay with FitzGerald, and they would purchase their newspapers at John Loder's bookshop, and their tobacco either at the "Bull" or the "Crown" and then, along with Fitz, make their "discreet journeys in uneventful directions" on foot or on the river Deben in FitzGerald's boat, the Scandal.

By a few deft strokes, Mr. Morley shows us his father: the brilliant shy boy, going over to play chess with the old astronomer royal, who, when the boy's father died, insisted he go up to Cambridge. This was indeed an innovation for a Quaker tradesman's son, and Mr. Morley describes the loneliness of the boy at the University, living inconspicuously on bread and marmalade, and the subsequent release and delight he found at Haverford, in music, and mathematics, and above all in the author's mother, whom her three sons called "Madam Doctors" (for their father was "Doctors" to them).

Every detail is illuminating as the margin of a medieval missal. Consider Doctors' arrival in America: ". . . there was, in the interior courtyard of his mind, a natural elegance, and an extraordinary delicacy. You get a glimpse of the quickness in the way he astonished the friend who met him. The ship docked at Philadelphia, and shortly after, the two men were walking up Market Street. There was a street-vendor with apples on a barrow, with a large placard, '3 for 5.' My father instantly stopped to ask the apple-seller, 'Excuse me, which do you mean? Three apples for five cents, or three cents for five apples?' The appleman made no recorded answer, except to raise up the end of his barrow and hastily push off into a side-street."

And what son has ever found out, by indirections, a most direct tribute to a father than Mr. Morley's description of the chess game between them, "which was never satisfactory, because I was never able to give him a good enough game." After relating the "sad, inevitable end, when the book (perhaps Middlemarch) was lowered for the last time" Mr. Morley concludes comfortingly, that "in the wider ramifications of mathematics Doctors and I did find mutual creativity."

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And what pathos is in the story of the Book, the mathematics book upon which father and son collaborated! Like a good sherry, that circles the seven seas seven times, the MSS crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, to be published at last, most appositely, in time for Doctors to reap a quiet harvest, and "die opulent" (as the sole record of a Northamptonshire worthy states on his tomb). But Doctors' opulence was a spiritual harvest—he had reaped fully the promise of the fourth commandment.

The really impressive climax of this book—Mr. Morley's on chess not Doctors'—is his account of the National War Labor Board. How terribly and tremendously apposite at this nadir moment, is this story of a successful experiment in management-labor-government relations. General Motors and the United Steel workers might well paste the story of the southern textile case (not forgetting the maxims of Sir Matthew Hale) on the walls of their offices.

As for the actual modification of the chessboard that Mr. Morley suggests, as he rightly remarks, it is not because he is, or could be bored by the game. The number of possible ways of playing the first ten moves on either side is 169,518,829,100,544,000,000,000,000,000 and it would take more than 217,000,000,000,000 years to go through them all, assuming a chess-playing population of the earth of 1450 million souls, all playing without cessation, no move to be repeated, and an average of one move per minute being allowed. No, Mr. Morley has devised his modification in order to narrow the gap between fathers and sons—as players. Is there, perhaps, a tiny Golden-Bough-ish or even Freudian barb left rankling in his heart from those early, and continual, defeats?

The main purpose of chess has always been pedagogic, philosophic and therapeutic. Mr. Morley is quite traditional in suggesting the game be used as occupational therapy for returning veterans. The most generally accepted account of the game's invention, is an ancient Arab one. A widowed queen hired a learned Brahmin to teach her son, the young king, the way he should go. The Brahmin taught him chess. After one lesson, the queen was so delighted she offered the Brahmin anything he asked if he would but continue. One grain of wheat on the first chess square, he modestly asked, two on the second, four on the third . . . instantly, of course, his request was granted. But the queen's granaries did not suffice, nor all the granaries of the world. For the number of grains required is 18,446,744,073,709,551,615, and to produce this quantity, it would be necessary to sow six times all five continents!

Mr. Morley's Knight's tour, given both on the old board, and on the new (the corridor board has a total of 76 squares), would have amused Nila Kaut'ha, who somewhere around the year 400 A.D. made it very differently. But it is one of those infinitely variable conundrums—perhaps the very one they were working out in that chess game shown on the Pyramid of Gizeh, which has now been playing nearly 5,000 years.

Alas, that I am myself not competent to judge Old Bird's mistake in the memorable game so deftly re-played by Mr. Morley on both the old and the new board. My own chess life was blighted in Czechoslovakia when I was fourteen. The German translator of G. B. Shaw, one Herr Trebnitsch, seeing me piously playing with my mama whilst others danced (I was not allowed to dance) offered to give me a game. In five moves he beat

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ne (NOT fools mate, I'm glad to say) and then coldly ose with the worlds *"Noch nicht die Anfang"*—not yet he beginning.

But what a game it is—not even Herr Trebitsch could spoil it for me, and not even my complete ignorance—nor anyone else's—could prevent their doting on Mr. Morley's book. It is in the tradition of Sir Thomas Browne, and of Montaigne—perhaps these two may care to try the variant on Old Bird's ninth move shown in figure 5, in some celestial nook? Or they might use Old Bird's game, as the mu'tazilite's used chess (their opponents relying on nard—however that was played) to demonstrate the truth of free-will. ANNE FREMANTLE.

Wasteland. Jo Sinclair. Harper. $2.50.

THE current Harper Prize Novel is a tense, sincere, inconclusive study of an American Jew and of the racial minority problem as it is individualized in Jake Brown and his immediate family. Readers will discover in its poignant evocation of suffering many resemblances to "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" and in its probing awareness of social and psychological pressure some similarity to "Native Son." However, it differs from both in several important respects—it has no idealistic character like Francie Nolan; no really tragic figure like Richard Wright's hero. Moreover, "Wasteland" is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Freud.

Jake Brown's corrosive hates and frustrations—products of a long and bitter familial history—are related in a series of interviews with a psychiatrist. The doctor who turns Jake's thinking into the mystery of his past is both the director and the interpreter of the action, at once stage manager and chorus. His prominence in the story results in development of both the artistic and the scientific points of view. Part of the time we live by illusion within the minds and hearts of a Jewish family group; part of the time we are inspecting their passions and perversions with a clinical eye. In striving earnestly to maintain her story on both planes it is an open question as to whether Miss Sinclair has not fallen into the abyss between them.

There may well be some objection to "Wasteland" in so far as it attempts to state and to solve various aspects of our current racial problem. Although Miss Sinclair does accomplish the reintegration of Jake Brown as an individual, as a citizen and as a member of the Jewish family, the resolution of his problems supposes an understanding of the pathology of the sick rather than the mores of the healthy. "Wasteland" is not altogether lacking in appreciation of Jewish religious values. Indeed the crux of Jake's problem is symbolized in his participation in a Hebrew ritual. But, as the title implies, the author is concerned with frustration, defeat and despair. Jake and his family do not represent the majority of the Jewish people; their problems are not the basic problems of the Jewish community. This should be clear enough to the intelligent reader.

"Wasteland" will be read widely because it is scientifically sexy, treats of the currently important race problem and has won a prize. A case history, rather than a work of literature, the book is written in a nervous, almost strident, style. The language is deliberately frank throughout. A most offensive feature is the constant (and needless) blasphemy of the central character.

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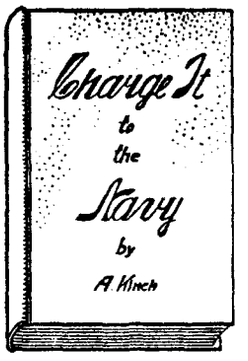

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THE SHORT CASE, by George H. Dunne, deals with the implications of a frightful incident which occurred in Fontana, California, this Christmas. It is a story of a Negro family and their little home in the country, which Mr. Short built with his own hands. Mr. and Mrs. Short and their two children were burned to death under the most suspicious circumstances. Father Dunne tells the story and its significance in such a way that it will long be remembered.

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The Street. Ann Petry. Houghton. $2.50.

OUR opinions are shaped by the form as well as the content of our reading. I was introduced to the negro problem in literature by Carl Van Vechten' "Nigger Heaven," which I read as a high school student Perhaps the deep impression it made led me to favor "Native Son" and "Strange Fruit," with their obvious deficiencies, to more objective studies. There must be an emotional impetus to give strength to our protest when we confront a deep rooted evil, and fiction not only lifts us from complacency, but supplies the necessary drive This may account for my strong recommendation of "The Street" by Ann Petry.

It is a story of courage crushed by circumstance, the tragic defeat of a young colored woman in a hopeless struggle to lift herself and her son from the poverty of "The Street." This typical, tawdry and foul-smelling block, with its dirt and crime, is a symbol of all she must fight. Quite properly, it is in Harlem, that same Harlem that young negro sailors from the Deep South view as the Promised Land. To Lutie Johnson, such a street is no accident; it is the Northern version of the Lynch law, the method the large cities use to keep the Negro in his place. Into the story of her failure is woven all the handicaps of her race: the fundamental issue of her husband's inability to get steady work, her flight to domestic service, the disruption of her family life. Her stay in a crisp clean country home awakened desires for material comfort, but she is forced back into the Black Ghetto with its intolerable housing and high rents.

In part her handicaps are specifically Negro; but in part they are the lot of all the poor of our industrial slums. The tragedy of race emotion is that it gathers up all discontent, and unifies evil under the badge of color. A good-looking white girl in the subway would attract the same glances, but to Lutie they had an added bitterness. A maid in Grand Central might be dismissed curtly by a Mr. Chandler, an ignorant superintendent would fail to attract a beautiful tenant, a grade teacher may be incompetent, but in the present state of racial tension, such incidents are magnified artificially. The basic evil throws its shadows into all of life.

Miss Petry's writing is distinguished by sensitivity to detail: to the different sounds of the same door opening, to the colors on the vegetable stand, the marks on the furniture, the movements of the big cats in the Zoo at feeding time. The same quality applied to her characters gives plausibility to events beyond our experience. "The Street" may have technical flaws, but it has real power, and is a good story. Read it.

J. N. MOODY.

CONTRIBUTORS

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